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STUDENT FEES:

A SURVEY CONDUCTED BY REGIONAL OFFICES OF ALBERTA EDUCATION

November, 1983

STUDENT FEES

A. INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

The survey of student fees was conducted by staff of the Regional Offices of Education last fall. Information was sought, mainly by telephone from personnel in selected school board offices and schools in each of the six zones with respect to charges levied to pupils.

It became evident during the course of the survey that comparable data were not readily obtainable. Charges to students vary considerably from jurisdiction to jurisdiction in manner of definition, dollar amount and number of items involved. In addition, fees vary greatly between schools within a jurisdiction as well as among students within individual schools.

The two exceptions to this general rule were textbook rental fees and Home Economics and Industrial Arts fees. These fees were reported in a somewhat consistent manner and are therefore tabulated in Table 1 and Table 2.

B. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON SELECTED FEES

1. Band Instrument Rentals

Schools offering band generally charge a fee ranging from $3 to $80 for rental of instruments. Most, however, extended to students the option of purchasing band instruments.

2. Driver Education

Several systems offer Driver Education 10. The fee varied from $125 to $256 for individual students.

3. Locker Fee

This fee varied from $1 to $6. All, or a portion, of this fee was refundable in most systems. In some schools the fee was collected as part of the Students' Union fee.

4. Bussing Fees

These are often charged in connection with athletic events and/or extra-curricular activities. Some systems charged ineligible students a transportation fee. These varied a great deal with one jurisdiction charging as much as $180 for a family.

5. Athletics

Fees charged in this category include such items as purchase or rent of uniforms, athletic activity fee (e.g., basketball, badminton, football, swimming, skiing, curling, camping) and sale of personal items (e.g.,

gym shoes). Schools offering Physical Education 30 tend to levy substantial fees in this category (e.g., $50 to $100).

6. Student Union Activities

Most secondary schools levy a students' union fee ($1 to $5) and a yearbook fee ($5 to $20). Graduation fees or deposits are also charged in some instances. Payment for most if not all charges in this category is voluntary.

7. Course Fees

A number of senior high schools charge course fees, presumably to cover the costs of materials or supplies and rentals. These generally range, if one were to exclude band and driver education, from $3 to $20. This practice also prevails in many systems with respect to Junior High Options (e.g., Art, Drama).

8. Supplies

A great number of rural systems sell supplies to students. The dollar amount varies depending on use made of this service by individual students.

9. Miscellaneous Fees

In this category one could include accident insurance, school photos, students' I.D. cards, library fee, E.C.S. snack fee; etc. These charges are levied, generally, by individual schools, presumably with the approval or sanction of their board.

C. SUMMARY COMMENTS

1. No systems or schools reported that the number of items for which fees are collected or the dollar amount charged to students had risen significantly during the past year. Most fees with the exception of Computer Fees were reported to have been in existence in some form or other, for several years.

2. There is no evidence to suggest that boards are acting illegally in the charging of fees to students. Boards in their collecting of student fees appear to be acting in accordance with Sections 72(4)(k) and 165(3) of the School Act.

3. Of the 84 systems contacted, 22 systems reported that their policy includes recourse to the courts (e.g., small debts court) with respect to dealing with non-payment of required fees. Others indicated having a policy of withdrawing certain services from students or families who were delinquent regarding payment of fees. The majority of systems, however, reported that unpaid fees eventually are written off. It may be noted further that no system reported the withholding of marks with respect to non-payment of fees.

4. There appears to be a wide discrepancy in fees charged. At the senior high school level this discrepancy may well range from $40 to possibly $200 depending upon the jurisdiction, school, individual student program and student-teacher interests.

5. The matter of determining fees charged individual students in various schools/jurisdictions in the province is highly detailed and complex. It is suggested, therefore, that a further survey be conducted using individual students as a basis for sampling. For example and as follow-up, students might be interviewed in two or more schools in a jurisdiction and across programs in a school to determine the actual fees charged to individual students and families.

D. CONCLUDING STATEMENT

In view of the limitations of this brief survey, use the results including the summary comments cautiously. A much more thorough study is required in order to obtain definitive and conclusive information regarding the matter.

As information, although not directly related to this study, is the matter of Family Allowance. It should be noted that the following allowances are paid to the mother or parent having legal custody of the child:

Age	Amount ($) Per Month
0-6	22.10
7-11	27.70
12-15	36.40
16-17	40.10

This allowance is intended to help defray the costs of maintaining a child including the educating of the child.

TABLE 1

PROVINCIAL SUMMARY

(Excluding Four Large Urban Systems)

	ZONE 1	ZONE 2	ZONE 3	ZONE 4	ZONE 5	ZONE 6	PROVINCE
NUMBER OF JURISDICTIONS	21	10	15	13	11	10	80
Textbook Rental Fees:							
($)							
1. Elementary - Average	22	17	23	25	19	19	21
- Range	5 to 35	10 to 25	5 to 36	15 to 48	15 to 25	6 to 26	
2. Junior High - Average	26	23	37	27	23	22	27
- Range	5 to 45	16 to 26	13 to 42	19 to 42	19 to 30	15 to 29	
3. Senior High - Average	39	37	38	37	29	33	36
- Range	22 to 105	25 to 50	24 to 72	23 to 52	20 to 35	20 to 50	
Home Economics:							
($) - Average	11	10	13	11	11	7	11
- Range	2 to 20	7 to 14	8 to 20	2 to 20	10 to 16	2 to 12	
Industrial Arts:							
($) - Average	10	14	15	10	11	7	11
- Range	3 to 20	7 to 25	8 to 25	3 to 20	10 to 16	5 to 12	

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

RANDOM LISTING OF FEES CHARGED TO STUDENTS

Textbook Rental
Home Economics
Industrial Arts
Driver Education 10
Band Instrument
Music
Junior High Option
Performing Arts
Consumable Workbooks
Swimming Facilities
Arts and Crafts
Data Programming Disc
Typewriting (Equipment Maintenance)
Yearbook
Student Union
Lockers
School Photos
Locks (refundable)
Typewriting Paper
Uniforms
Library Fines
Extra Curriculur Bus
Parking
Special Events
P.E. Options
Band
Cultural Activity
Novels and Workbooks
Dictionaries
Current Events Magazine
Jackets

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Registration Fee

Sport Team

Art Supplies

Caution Fees (refundable)

P.E. 30

Camping

French (periodicals)

Art

E.C.S. Fee

Electronics

Blackfoot Students

Music Instruction

French Workbook

Transportation

Grade 12 Graduation

Elective Courses (P.E. 20, 10 Vocational courses)

Academic Resource Fee

P.E. Clothing

Activity Week

Social Studies Magazine

Science Magazine

E.C.S. - juice fee, lunch, snacks

General School Fee

Enrichment Week

Computer Option

Band uniforms, instrumental

Guitar

Ski program

Club

Bussing of Bilingual students

Periodicals

Extended Programs (Drama, Sci., Bowling)

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Auto Body and all trades

Course (Henry Wise Wood)

Activity Pass

I.D. Card

First Aid

Bilingual Program

Bus passes

Insurance

Home & School

Field Trips

Immersion English

Personal Property Material

Ceramics

Shorthand

Law

Non-resident Canadian

Non-resident non-Canadian

Home & School membership

APPENDIX B

INVENTORY BY CATEGORY OF FEES CHARGED TO STUDENTS

1. BASIC FEES

Textbook Rental
Performing Arts
Swimming Facilities
Academic Resource
Registration
Activity Week
Enrichment Week
Consumable Workbooks
Special Events
Bussing

2. E.C.S. FEES

Registration
Lunch, juice, snacks, etc.
Transportation
Materials

3. RENTALS

Band Instruments
Lockers
Locks
Parking

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4. CAUTION AND LIBRARY FEES

Library Fines

Caution Fees

Drafting

5. COURSE FEES

Home Economics

Industrial Arts

Driver Education 10

Music

Junior High Options

Arts and Crafts

Data Programming Disc

Typewriting

P.E. Options (e.g. camping)

Band

Magazines (all courses)

Art

Electronics

P.E. Clothing

First Aid

Bilingual programs

Vocational and Technical (all courses)

Science II

Personal Property Materials

Ceramics

Shorthand

Law

Accounting

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6. EXTRA CURRICULAR

Yearbook
Students' Union
School Photos
Team Uniforms
Bussing
School Jackets
Sport Teams
Grade 12 Graduation
Activity Fee
Accident Insurance
I.D. Card
Field Trips